

CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) An automated software distribution method comprising:

receiving a request to access a software distribution system;

determining if the requester request is from a registered user;

determining if whether the registered user is authorized to perform a an internal software development ~~sealeable distribution framework activity~~ corresponding to software projects in the software distribution system and determining whether the registered user is authorized to perform a commercial transaction to download software from the software distribution system;

~~said determining comprising examining a transaction right associated with said registered user;~~

providing the registered user access to one or more software projects and tools that facilitate the development of the software projects when the registered user is authorized to perform internal software development activity, where the register user utilizes the tools to create or modify the performing an internal process associated with a software project under development projects when said requester is authorized to perform said software development

~~sealeable distribution framework activity;~~

determining if ~~said~~ whether the registered user is authorized entitled to perform a commercial transaction to download software from the software distribution system, where the register user is entitled to perform a commercial transaction with the software distribution system when the register user has provided financial consideration for the software to be downloaded from the software distribution system or established a service contract corresponding to the software to be downloaded

~~sealeable distribution framework activity; said determining comprising examining a transaction right associated with said registered user;~~

providing the registered user access to software available for distribution that the registered user is entitled to download from the software distribution system, where the register user downloads the software from the software distribution system when the registered user is both authorized and entitled to perform commercial transactions to download software from the software distribution system

~~performing a sealeable software distribution system commeree transaction, when said requester is authorized to perform said commercial sealeable distribution framework activity;~~₂ and

storing and tracking information associated with both internal software development activity performed by registered users and commercial transactions resulting in software being

~~downloaded from the software distribution system by registered users said automated software distribution method, wherein said automated software distribution method utilizes a scaleable software distribution framework and object model in which objects are linked together by unique object identifiers.~~

2. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1 further comprising, if said requester is not a registered user, notifying said requester that access is not granted and providing the requester an opportunity to register with the software distribution system.

3. (Original) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1 wherein the request is received from an internal user via an internal LAN.

4. (Original) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1 wherein the request is received from an external user via the Internet.

5. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1 wherein ~~said internal process comprises allowing~~ access to one or more software projects allows the registered user to access an internal storage of software products.

6. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1 wherein ~~said internal process comprises allowing said~~ access to one or more software projects allows the registered user to download software code, make changes and upload the modified code.

7. (Original) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1 wherein a scaleable software distribution system commerce transaction is engaged in an electronic commerce environment.

8. (Original) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1 wherein a software transaction process is utilized.

9. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1, wherein said internal process comprises an internal software publishing process, said ~~internal software publishing process comprising:~~ includes

~~receiving a request to engage in software image publishing activities;~~

~~engaging in a data population process in accordance with a scaleable software distribution framework and object model in which objects are linked together by unique object identifiers;~~

~~checking information associated with a software project under development to ensure the requester has authorization to engage in software image publication activities;~~

~~confirming the registered user is authorized to publish downloadable software to the software distribution system;~~

~~populating the software distribution system with data corresponding to downloadable software with a software publishing tool available to registered users authorized to perform internal software development activities, the data includes software code, product release information corresponding the downloadable software, and packaging information that maps the software code to a displayable image corresponding to the downloadable software;~~

~~receiving requisite supervisory authorization to proceed with the publication of the downloadable software, where the requisite supervisory authorization includes an accuracy check of the downloadable software by a manager of the software distribution system other than the registered user that populated the software distribution system with data corresponding to downloadable software; and~~

~~publishing the downloadable software to the software distribution system according to the data populated in the software distribution system, the publishing performed responsive to receiving the requisite supervisory authorization to proceed with the publication~~

~~executing a software publication.~~

10. (Previously Presented) The internal software publishing process of Claim 9 wherein the request is received from a software engineer that has built a software image ready for commercial release.

11. (Previously Presented) The internal software publishing process of Claim 9 wherein the data population process includes a software distribution framework (SWDF) Information Model, a SWDF Product Model and a SWDF Packaging Model.

12. (Previously Presented) The internal software publishing process of Claim 9 wherein a software distribution framework (SWDF) packaging model is completed by pulling data from a database that includes features that map a software image and software product code.

13. (Previously Presented) The internal software publishing process of Claim 9 wherein software distribution framework (SWDF) authorization information is checked to make sure the requester has appropriate role responsibility to engage in image publishing.

14. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution method of Claim 1, ~~wherein said commercial sealable distribution framework activity comprises a~~

~~commercial transaction process, said commercial transaction process comprising:~~

examining the commercial transaction rights of the registered user ~~a requester~~;

making a determination if the registered user ~~requester~~ has entitlement to proceed with a commercial transaction;

when the registered user is not entitled to proceed with the commercial transaction,
prompting the registered user to provide financial consideration for the software to be
downloaded or to establish a service contract for the software to be downloaded ~~engaging in a~~
~~commercial transaction entitlement process;~~

investigating to determine if a the registered user ~~requester~~ successfully provided
financial consideration for the software to be downloaded or to established a service contract for
the software to be downloaded ~~completed a commercial transaction entitlement process;~~ and

executing the requested commercial transaction when the registered user has provided
financial consideration for the software to be downloaded or to established a service contract for
the software to be downloaded.

15. (Previously Presented) A commercial transaction process of Claim 14 wherein a SWDF system stores information on the commercial transaction rights of external customers.

16. (Previously Presented) A commercial transaction process of Claim 15 wherein a SWDF system stores information on the entitlements of external customers to engage in commercial transactions.

17. (Previously Presented) A commercial transaction process of Claim 15 wherein SWDF Entitlement Information includes information on whether the customer has a service contract or paid money for the requested software product and if the customer has entitlement to proceed the requested software product is downloaded.

18. (Previously Presented) A commercial transaction process of Claim 15 wherein the commercial transaction process is an electronic commerce process.

19. (Previously Presented) A commercial transaction process of Claim 15 wherein the software product comprises software image binary executables, readme information, installation instructions, product manuals, guide and software requirements, and software release note, and software licensing key.

20. (Currently Amended) An automated software distribution system comprising:
a-means for determining if whether a user is entitled to perform a an internal software development activity according to instructions stored on a computer-readable medium, wherein said software development activity is accessible through said automated software distribution system, ~~said determining comprising examining a transaction right associated with said registered user;~~

a-means for determining if whether said user is entitled to perform a commercial activity transaction to download software from the automated software distribution system according to instructions stored on the computer-readable medium, wherein said commercial activity is accessible through said automated software distribution system, where the user is entitled to

perform a commercial transaction with the automated software distribution system when the user has provided financial consideration for the software to be downloaded from the automated software distribution system or established a service contract corresponding to the software to be downloaded; ~~said determining comprising examining a transaction right associated with said user;~~

~~a means for communicating information associated with an automated software distribution method;~~

means for providing the user access to one or more software projects and tools that facilitate the development of the software projects according to instructions stored on the computer-readable medium when the user is authorized to perform internal software development activity, where the register user utilizes the tools to create or modify the projects;

~~a means for processing said information associated with said automated software distribution method; and~~

means for providing the user access to software available for distribution that the user is entitled to download from the automated software distribution system according to instructions stored on the computer-readable medium, where the user downloads the software from the automated software distribution system when the registered user is both authorized and entitled to perform commercial transactions to download software from the software distribution system; and

a means for storing and tracking said information associated with both internal software development activity performed by users and commercial transactions resulting in software being downloaded from the software distribution system by users ~~said automated software distribution method, wherein said automated software distribution method utilizes a scaleable software distribution framework and object model in which objects are linked together by unique object identifiers.~~

21. (Previously Presented) An automated software distribution system of Claim 20 wherein said information associated with an automated software distribution method is organized in accordance with software distribution framework (SWDF) modules that manage the software distribution information and activities in accordance with SWDF models.

22. (Previously Presented) An automated software distribution system of Claim 21 wherein said information associated with an automated software distribution method is organized in accordance with a software distribution framework (SWDF) database, wherein SWDF database schema components are configured in accordance with four categories comprising regular database tables, composite link database tables, associating link database tables and runtime information query components.

23. (Previously Presented) An automated software distribution system of Claim 21 wherein said information associated with an automated software distribution method is tracked and manipulated by means for indicating classes, attributes and operations.

24. (Previously Presented) An automated software distribution system of Claim 21 further comprising a means for managing different areas of framework information including user information, authorization information, software information, configuration information, commerce information, publication information, and distribution information.

25. (Previously Presented) An automated software distribution system of Claim 21 wherein a link database is table is a persistent storage for the relationship of two objects.

26. (Currently Amended) An automated software distribution apparatus comprising:
a bus for communicating information associated with an automated software distribution method;

an input mechanism for receiving requests from a user for access to said information, said user having associated transaction rights;

a processor for ~~processing said information associated with an automated software distribution method to~~

determine whether the registered user is authorized to perform an internal software development activity corresponding to software projects in the software distribution system and determining whether the registered user is authorized to perform a commercial transaction to download software from the software distribution system;

provide the registered user access to one or more software projects and tools that facilitate the development of the software projects when the registered user is authorized to perform internal software development activity, where the register user utilizes the tools to modify the software projects;

determine whether the registered user is entitled to perform a commercial transaction to download software from the software distribution system, where the register user is entitled to perform a commercial transaction with the software distribution system when the register user has provided financial consideration for the software to be downloaded from the software distribution system or established a service contract corresponding to the software to be downloaded;

provide the registered user access to software available for distribution that the registered user is entitled to download from the software distribution system, where the register user downloads the software from the software distribution system when the registered user is both authorized and entitled to perform commercial transactions to download software from the software distribution system; and

a memory for storing and tracking said information associated with an automated software distribution method, wherein said automated software distribution method utilizes a scalable software distribution framework and object model in which objects are linked together by unique object identifiers.

27. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution apparatus of Claim 26 wherein the processor is adapted to said bus is communicatively coupled to a communication network

confirm the registered user is authorized to publish downloadable software to the software distribution system;

populate the software distribution system with data corresponding to downloadable software with a software publishing tool available to registered users authorized to perform internal software development activities, the data includes software code, product release information corresponding the downloadable software, and packaging information that maps the software code to a displayable image corresponding to the downloadable software;

receive requisite supervisory authorization to proceed with the publication of the downloadable software, where the requisite supervisory authorization includes an accuracy check of the downloadable software by a manager of the software distribution system other than the registered user that populated the software distribution system with data corresponding to downloadable software; and

publish the downloadable software to the software distribution system according to the data populated in the software distribution system, the publishing performed responsive to receiving the requisite supervisory authorization to proceed with the publication.

28. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution apparatus of Claim 27 wherein the processor is adapted to ~~an automated software distribution method is implemented via said communications network~~

examine the commercial transaction rights of the registered user;

make a determination if the registered user has entitlement to proceed with a commercial transaction;

when the registered user is not entitled to proceed with the commercial transaction, prompt the registered user to provide financial consideration for the software to be downloaded or to establish a service contract for the software to be downloaded;

investigate to determine if a the registered user requester successfully provided financial consideration for the software to be downloaded or to established a service contract for the software to be downloaded; and

execute the requested commercial transaction when the registered user has provided financial consideration for the software to be downloaded or to established a service contract for the software to be downloaded.

29. (Previously Presented) The automated software distribution apparatus of Claim 27 wherein an XML-based software distribution framework is utilized to enable automatic distribution of software over the Internet and World Wide Web (WWW) while coordinating, correlating and collecting information that assists software distribution management and maintenance activities.

30. (Previously Presented) The automated software distribution apparatus of Claim 27 wherein software images are published based on software rights associated with a business rule/responsibility model and software products are distributed to customers based on commerce model.

31. (Currently Amended) A computer usable medium having a computer readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform an automated software distribution method, said automated software distribution method comprising:

receiving a request to access a software distribution system;

determining if the requester request is from a registered user;

determining if a whether the registered user has authorization to perform an internal software development activity corresponding to software projects in the software distribution system and determining whether the registered user is authorized to perform a commercial transaction to download software from the software distribution system; ~~said determining comprising examining a transaction right associated with said registered user;~~

providing the registered user access to one or more software projects and tools that facilitate the development of the software projects when the registered user is authorized to perform internal software development activity, where the register user utilizes the tools to create or modify the performing an internal process associated with a software development scaleable software distribution framework; projects when said user is authorized to perform said internal software development activity;

determining if a whether the registered user is ~~has authorization~~ entitled to perform a commercial transaction to download software from the software distribution system, where the register user is entitled to perform a commercial transaction with the software distribution system when the register user has provided financial consideration for the software to be downloaded from the software distribution system or established a service contract corresponding to the software to be downloaded scaleable distribution framework activity; ~~said determining comprising examining a transaction right associated with said registered user;~~

providing the registered user access to software available for distribution that the registered user is entitled to download from the software distribution system, where the register user downloads the software from the software distribution system when the registered user is

both authorized and entitled to perform commercial transactions to download software from the software distribution system ~~performing a scaleable software distribution system commerce transaction, when said requester is authorized to perform said commercial scaleable distribution framework activity;~~ and

utilizing a scaleable software distribution framework and object model in which in which objects are linked together by unique object identifiers.

32. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution method of Claim 31 ~~wherein the request is received from an external user via the Internet~~ includes

confirming the registered user is authorized to publish downloadable software to the software distribution system;

populating the software distribution system with data corresponding to downloadable software with a software publishing tool available to registered users authorized to perform internal software development activities, the data includes software code, product release information corresponding the downloadable software, and packaging information that maps the software code to a displayable image corresponding to the downloadable software;

receiving requisite supervisory authorization to proceed with the publication of the downloadable software, where the requisite supervisory authorization includes an accuracy check of the downloadable software by a manager of the software distribution system other than the registered user that populated the software distribution system with data corresponding to downloadable software; and

publishing the downloadable software to the software distribution system according to the data populated in the software distribution system, the publishing performed responsive to receiving the requisite supervisory authorization to proceed with the publication.

33. (Currently Amended) The automated software distribution method of Claim 32 ~~wherein the user is able to access an internal storage of software products~~ includes

examining the commercial transaction rights of the registered user;

making a determination if the registered user has entitlement to proceed with a commercial transaction;

when the registered user is not entitled to proceed with the commercial transaction,
prompting the registered user to provide financial consideration for the software to be
downloaded or to establish a service contract for the software to be downloaded;

investigating to determine if a the registered user ~~requester~~ successfully provided
financial consideration for the software to be downloaded or to established a service contract for
the software to be downloaded; and

executing the requested commercial transaction when the registered user has provided
financial consideration for the software to be downloaded or to established a service contract for
the software to be downloaded.

34. (Previously Presented) The automated software distribution method of Claim 33 wherein an internal user is able to download software code, make changes and upload the modified code and both internal and external users are able to engage in a scaleable software distribution system commerce transaction.